

NSC BRIEFING

FRANCE--ALGERIA

FRANCE

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- I. Pflimlin government has managed to retain broad parliamentary support.
- A. All parties except Poujadists, Gaullists and majority of Independents voted emergency powers for France and Algeria.
- II. Pflimlin majority, however, not as good as it looks--
- A. Independents still refuse full support.
1. Four Independents in cabinet on individual basis, party won't let influential Pinay join cabinet.
 2. Communists, who have supported Pflimlin, did so only as alternative to De Gaulle.
- III. Pflimlin's ability to control situation depends on several factors.
- A. Public apathy thus far--which helps by dampening extremist pressure, but which would handicap resistance to coup.
- B. Reliability of police and security forces--
1. These are predominantly rightist, believed reliable, but might not oppose military coup.
- C. Reliability of military in France, which is complicated by their desire not to split with generals in Algiers--
1. Resignation of Chief of Armed Forces Staff General Ely points up military problem.
 2. De Gaulle's endorsement of Algiers military may force hand of Pflimlin, who has thus far adopted appeasement approach including refraining from condemnation, promising larger

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B. Pflimlin also must move soon in several touchy economic and social areas which can divide his parliamentary support.

1. Balance of payments deficit is worsening and revenue needed for increased defense expenditures.

2. Cost of living keeps climbing.

IV. Meanwhile, military in France and Algeria mounting all out "war of nerves," to force Pflimlin to resign.

A. Some French officers told General Norstad that Pflimlin will not succeed in reestablishing control of French forces in Algeria.

B. They added that paratroop operations against Metropole are likely if Pflimlin doesn't give in.

C. While some of these scare reports are obvious efforts to convince US that De Gaulle is only solution, possibility of some extreme tactics by rightists cannot be discounted.

1. US consul general Algiers sees recent developments "irreversible."

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V. Precise power relationships inside Algeria unclear.

A. Salan, who represents last shred of legality, still recognized by both Paris and Algiers as supreme titular authority and will probably continue to be so recognized, until clear test develops between Paris and Algiers.

B. US consul general Algiers feels that real authority being wielded by Massu's paratroops and Algiers public safety committee on which civilian extremists apparently predominate--with these two elements enjoying widespread support in remainder of army.

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1. These views generally confirmed by General Petit of Ely's staff.

C. Ultimately, rightist civilians—who are most anti-Pflimlin of all—may exert decisive influence.

1. Soustelle at present principal spokesman and propagandist for civilians, although still without formal status in Algeria. This may be result of reported friction with Salan.

VI. Most of 1.2 million Europeans in Algeria apparently approve recent developments.

VII. Some Moslems--variously motivated--also exhibiting public support but unlikely many Moslem leaders really support junta.

A. FLN will almost certainly ignore Salan's amnesty offer and continue to fight.

B. However, top rebel chief said on 19 May rebels will act with "great caution" during next weeks and seek to avoid providing any pretext for attack by French against Tunisia. Rebel units in Tunisia have been reported pulled well back from the border with Algeria.

VIII. Morocco and, especially, Tunisia extremely anxious over situation.

A. No evidence now that French, who have long regarded Bourguiba as "number one enemy" because he supports rebels, preparing any early military operation against Tunisia.

B. But likelihood such action would be greatly increased in event provocative actions by Bourguiba or rebels.

C. Meanwhile growing restiveness among French troops in Tunisia.

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D. Bourguiba told [REDACTED] 16 May his regime in danger and formally asked for urgent "symbolic" shipment of small arms.

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